

BSc Biological Sciences with Industrial experience

UCAS code: C101

Awarding Institution:
Teaching Institution:
Relevant QAA subject benchmarking group(s):
Faculty of Life Sciences
For students entering Part 1 in 2004
Programme Director: Dr P.D. Darbre
Programme Adviser: Dr S.M. Shimeld and Dr K.J. Purdy
Industrial liaison coordinator: to be appointed
Board of Studies: Biological Sciences
Accreditation: None

The University of Reading
The University of Reading
Biosciences
Programme length: 4 years
Date of specification: April 2003

Summary of programme aims

This degree aims to provide a broad academic training in biology together with experience of the wider applied needs of the community for biology. This will be achieved through a 4 year degree programme such that the student follows the full three year B.Sc. Hons. Degree programme in Biological Sciences but between years 2 and 3 the student would spend one year out in an industrial or institute environment.

At an academic level, this degree is concerned especially with the diversity of living organisms and includes studies of the biology of all types of organisms from viruses to flowering plants and mammals. The subject matter of Parts 1 and 2 is broadly based with specialisation in Parts 3 and 4 to provide a coherent, in-depth area of study which the student will select. Students are expected to gain a broad understanding of the concepts underpinning biological sciences and to demonstrate the ability to complete a detailed study of at least one discipline during Parts 3 and 4. They will receive training and be expected to demonstrate competence in laboratory techniques in biology, the use of computers to access information resources and the use of statistical programmes for data analyses. Students will be expected to acquire individual and group communication skills in written work and in oral and poster presentations. The development of critical reading skills will be strongly encouraged. (For a full statement of the programme aims and learning outcomes see below)

Transferable skills

The University's Strategy for Teaching and Learning has identified a number of generic transferable skills which all students are expected to have developed by the end of their degree programme. In following this programme, students will have had the opportunity to enhance their skills relating to career management, communication (both written and oral), information handling, numeracy, problem solving, team working and use of information technology.

As part of this programme all students are also expected to have gained experience and show competence in the following transferable skills:

1. The ability to assess, evaluate and present scientific data.
2. The ability to design and undertake a programme of scientific investigation and to effectively communicate the aims and results of this investigation.
3. A range of laboratory-based practical skills
4. The needs for biology in the wider community.

Programme content

The profile that follows states which modules must be taken in years 1,2 4 (the compulsory part), together with one or more lists of modules from which the student must make a selection (the 'selected' modules). Students must choose such additional modules as they wish, in consultation with their programme adviser, to make 120 credits in each of Parts 1,2, and 4.

Part 1 (three terms)		<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Compulsory modules</i>			
BI1S11	<i>Concepts and skills in biology 1</i>	10	C
BI1C10	<i>Cell Biology and biochemistry</i>	10	C
BI1C11	<i>Genetics and molecular biology</i>	10	C
BI1M10	<i>Biodiversity</i>	10	C
BI1S12	<i>Field Course</i>	10	C

In addition, students must select **at least one from**

BI1Z11	<i>Community ecology</i>	10	C
AM1M13	<i>Practical biochemistry</i>	10	C

Also, students without AS or A2 level Chemistry or an equivalent qualification must take:

BI1S10	<i>Chemistry for biologists</i>	10	C
--------	---------------------------------	----	---

Optional modules

Students will choose additional modules up to a total of 120 credits subject to the agreement of the Programme Adviser. This may include a range of Bioscience modules as listed below, plus modules from other areas of the University including languages from the Institution Wide Language Programme. Further details can be found in the Part 1 Biology Handbook.

BI1Z10	<i>Ecology</i>	10	C
AM1C12	<i>Animal physiology</i>	10	C
AM1M11	<i>Fundamental Microbiology</i>	10	C
AM1S10	<i>Introduction to biology</i>	10	C
AM1Z11	<i>Environmental biology</i>	10	C
AM1Z10	<i>The whole mammal</i>	10	C
AM1C13	<i>Digestion and nutrition</i>	10	C
AM1C14	<i>Biochemistry and metabolism</i>	10	C
AM1M12	<i>Important Microbes</i>	10	C
PS1HQ2	<i>Applied Plant Physiology</i>	10	C
PS1BB2	<i>Morphology of land plants</i>	10	C
PS1BB1	<i>Current topics in plant</i>	10	C
PS1BA2	<i>Plant development</i>	10	C
PS1BA1	<i>How plants work</i>	10	C
PS1AB2	<i>Physical ecology</i>	10	C
PS1AA1	<i>Plants in agriculture</i>	10	C

Part 2 (three terms)

Compulsory modules

Three compulsory modules, worth 30 credits in total, will expand the specific and transferable skills students have acquired at Part 1 and will deepen the knowledge of some key areas of Biological Sciences.

Optional modules

Students will choose additional modules up to a total of 120 credits subject to the agreement of the Programme Adviser. This may include a range of Bioscience modules, plus modules from other areas of the University including languages from the Institution Wide Language Programme. Details can be found in the Part 2 Biology Handbook.

Part 3 (three terms)	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Compulsory year out in an industrial placement or institute</i>		
AM2I01 <i>Industrial Placement</i>	120	H

Students will spend one year in an industrial or institute placement. Satisfactory attendance and performance during this year is an integral and compulsory part of this course.

Part 4 (three terms)	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Level</i>
<i>Compulsory modules</i>		
AM3S75 <i>Biology Project</i>	40	H
AM3S76 <i>Essays and seminars</i>	20	H

Optional modules

Students will choose additional modules up to a total of 120 credits subject to the agreement of the Programme Adviser. Details of the wide range of available modules can be found in the Part 3 Biology Handbook. In this final year students will be expected to focus their studies in one of several possible specialisations, including Zoology, Microbiology, Biochemistry and Botany.

Progression requirements

Progression from Part 1 to Part 2

To gain a threshold performance at Part 1 a student shall normally be required to achieve an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 1, and a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits. In order to progress from Part 1 to Part 2, a student shall normally be required to achieve a threshold performance at Part 1.

Progression from Part 2 to Part 3

To gain a threshold performance at Part 2 a student shall normally be required to achieve an overall average of 40% over 120 credits taken in Part 2, and a mark of at least 30% in individual modules amounting to not less than 100 credits. In order to progress from Part 2 to Part 3, a student shall normally be required to achieve a threshold performance at Part 2 and in order to secure a successful placement, it will normally be necessary to have achieved an average mark of 60% in all modules averaged together, i.e. equivalent to a 2:1 classification level.

Progression from Part 3 to Part 4

The industrial placement is assessed on a Pass/Fail basis. For successful completion of the industrial placement it is necessary to obtain a satisfactory report of attendance and performance from the industrial supervisor, to have submitted a satisfactory report to the School and to have presented a satisfactory seminar on the work carried out during the placement; a satisfactory mark will not be lower than 40%.

Students who at any stage fail to meet the progression requirements for this 4-year programme but who meet the progression requirements for the 3-year programme for BSc (Honours) in Biological Sciences will automatically be offered the opportunity to change to the 3-year programme.

Summary of teaching and assessment

Teaching within the University is organised in modules. Teaching in Part 1 consists of lectures and practical classes with small group work being largely restricted to the Concepts and Skills module. Modules can be assessed by 100% coursework but more usually are assessed by a combination of coursework (30%) and formal examination (70%).

In Parts 2 and 4, lectures and practical classes continue to be major modes of teaching but they are increasingly supplemented by seminars and other group work. Modules can be 100% in-course assessed but are more usually assessed by a combination of coursework (30%) and formal examination (70%).

In the year out in Part 3, learning will be as directed within the placement selected and offered to the student. Good attendance record and satisfactory performance is a requirement for progression to part 4 of the degree programme. Assessment will be by report from the industrial supervisor, a written report to the School and a seminar presentation on the work carried out during the placement.

The degree result will be calculated on the basis of contributions from Part 2 (1/3) and Part 4 (2/3). In order to be eligible for Honours, students must gain a Pass in Part 3 and at least 40% in all in Part 4 modules averaged together and at least 40% in the Part 4 Biology Project module.

The assessment is carried out within the University's degree classification scheme, details of which are in the programme handbooks.

Admission requirements

Entrants to this programme are normally required to have obtained:

UCAS Tariff: 300 points comprised of three A2 level science subjects each at grade B. This would normally include Biology at grade B but other science subjects can include Chemistry, Geography, Mathematics, Physics, Psychology. In addition, at GCSE level are required Mathematics, Double Science and English at minimal Grade B.

International Baccalaureat: 34 points to include 3 science subjects at higher level at grade 6

Scottish Highers ABBB (Biology A)

Irish Leaving Certificate: ABBBB (Biology A)

Admissions Tutor: Dr P.D. Darbre

Support for students and their learning

University support for students and their learning falls into two categories. Learning support includes IT Services, which has several hundred computers and the University Library, which across its three sites holds over a million volumes, subscribes to around 4,000 current periodicals, has a range of electronic sources of information and houses the Student Access to Independent Learning (S@IL) computer-based teaching and learning facilities. There are language laboratory facilities both for those students studying on a language degree and for those taking modules offered by the Institution-wide Language Programme. Student guidance and welfare support is provided by Personal Tutors, the Careers Advisory Service, the University's Special Needs Advisor, Study Advisors, Hall Wardens and the Students' Union.

In addition to the above, the School of Animal and Microbial Sciences has several well-equipped teaching laboratories and a dedicated computer laboratory providing students with in-house access to on-line educational material. The School of Animal and Microbial Sciences also houses an extensive Zoological museum and collection and the School of Plant Sciences a herbarium and botanic garden. These provide a rich source of material and specimens that are incorporated into several modules.

Career prospects

Reading Biological Science graduates are eligible for membership of the Institute of Biology and can achieve Chartered Biologist status. They are qualified to enter a variety of careers in the biological sciences, including work in industry (pharmaceuticals, biomedical, agrochemicals), government service (research institutes and bodies such as the Environment Agency) and other public bodies (local conservation units, animal charities). As numerate scientists they also enter a wide variety of commercial and business occupations.

Opportunities for study abroad

Students of Biological Sciences can take part in the Erasmus exchange programme in which they can spend the first term of Part 4 studying in a variety of other European Universities. Recent exchanges involving AMS students have taken place with the following: University of Tours, France; Odense University, Denmark; Uppsala University, Sweden; University College Cork, Ireland; University of Zaragoza, Spain; ENSA, Montpellier, France. Students also have the opportunity to go to Rostock University, Germany and Siena University, Italy.

Educational aims of the programme

The BSc in Biological Sciences is concerned especially with the diversity of living organisms. It includes study of the biology of all types of organisms, from microorganisms to flowering plants and mammals, at a level ranging from the molecular, biochemical and cellular to the physiological, environmental and ecological. The subject matter of Parts 1 and 2 is broadly based with specialisation in Parts 3 and 4 to provide a coherent, in-depth area of study which the student will select. Students are expected to gain a broad understanding of the concepts underpinning biological sciences and to demonstrate the ability to complete a detailed study of at least one discipline during Parts 3 and 4.

Programme Outcomes

The programme provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate knowledge and understanding, skills, qualities and other attributes in the following areas:

Knowledge and Understanding

<p>A. Knowledge and understanding of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The basic principles underlying the biological sciences2. The variety of groups of living organisms, from viruses and bacteria to complex multicellular organisms such as mammals and flowering plants3. Different levels of biological organisation of living organisms, from the molecular, biochemical and cellular to the physiological, environmental and ecological4. In depth understanding of least one specialist field of biology, the precise area to be selected by the student.	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies Compulsory and optional modules in Parts 1 and 2 introduce students to the diversity of living organisms at a variety of levels. A wide range of teaching strategies is employed in these modules, initially in relatively large-group lecture and practical sessions in Part 1. Smaller group teaching comes to dominate in Parts 2 and 4 and includes, depending on the modules chosen, additional teaching methods such as seminars, fieldwork and discussion sessions. Students will also have the option of attending full-time field courses during vacations. In Parts 3 and 4 students will be able to select a specific area of biology for in-depth study and will undertake a research project with one-to-one supervision by a member of academic staff or equivalent.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i> Knowledge and understanding gained in the majority of modules will be assessed by a combination of coursework and formal examination. Some modules, for example field courses, will be assessed by 100% coursework. The industrial placement will be assessed by written report and seminar presentation. The project undertaken in Part 4 will be assessed primarily by written report.</p>
---	---

Skills and other attributes

<p>B. Intellectual skills – able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Address problems in a logical and structured manner2. Manipulate and analyse numerical data3. Construct and test hypotheses4. Critically evaluate scientific literature and data	<p>Teaching/learning methods and strategies Basic skills associated with problem solving and data analysis are taught in a specific module using a variety of teaching methods. These skills are further developed in individual modules, for example on Field Courses students in small groups will be taught how to construct and logically investigate a hypothesis and to analyse the data produced. In Parts 3 and 4 students are able to enhance their critical and analytical skills by undertaking projects and to demonstrate this by presenting the results in accompanying dissertations and seminar.</p> <p><i>Assessment</i> Assessment of 1 and 2 is by examination. Critical evaluation of scientific data and literature is assessed in essay and dissertation form.</p>
--	---

C. Practical skills – able to:

1. Conduct practical laboratory and/or fieldwork safely and successfully.
2. Design and undertake a programme of scientific investigation

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Practical laboratory skills will be taught in Departmental teaching laboratories while fieldwork forms an integral part of several modules and is specifically taught on optional Field Courses. Further practical and field skills will also form part of the industrial placement and the Part 4 project, where students will be taught on a one-to-one basis how to design and implement a programme of scientific investigation.

Assessment

Skill 1 is typically assessed by course work, while skill 2 is assessed by written report.

D. Transferable skills:

1. To be able to communicate effectively in both written and oral form
2. To be numerate and capable of approaching problems in a logical and structured manner
3. To be able to operate effectively as part of a team
4. To be familiar with IT operation and resources
5. To be able to work independently
6. To be able to effectively plan and time manage projects

Teaching/learning methods and strategies

Specific Concepts and Skills modules in Parts 1 and 2 teach skills 1 to 4 using a combination of seminars, demonstrations and practical approaches. In addition, other modules include aspects of different skills, for example Field Courses include teamworking as part of structured group work and many modules include an integral component of written and oral communication as coursework. In Part 3 and Part 4 students undertake detailed projects during which their individual planning and time management skills are developed through contact with their placement and academic supervisors.

Assessment

Numeracy and Problem Solving are assessed by specific exam. Other skills are assessed by coursework as part of the Concepts and Skills modules. In addition, most individual modules include written and oral coursework as 30% of the total module assessment.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably expect to achieve and demonstrate if he/she takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in module and programme handbooks.